



Successful Guide to School Safety



The Division of Safe Schools
2025-2026



DeKalb County
School District

Navigating Successful Safety in Educational Environments

GPS to School Safety





The Purpose:

- Provide clarity on the partnership families and agencies play in school safety.
- Offer insight and understanding into monthly safety drills.
- Highlight state laws that support local safety efforts in our district and schools.
- Review the multilayered approach to school safety.
- Afford families the opportunity to share feedback specific to school safety.

Family Guide to School Safety

Stakeholders



Matter



Parents and Families as Partners



Monthly Safety Drills



Athletics & Extracurricular Events



Monthly Safety & Security Reminders

Family Guide to School Safety



What is the Safe Schools Act, HB 147?



When is the state window to conduct the Intruder Alert Drill?



Is an Intruder Alert Drill like a Lockdown Drill?



Safe Zones & Reunification



Always Closed & Locked Doors



Visitor & Safety Management



Partnerships



Questions & Feedback

Family Guide to School Safety

**What You Do
Matters**

**Parents and Families
as Partners**



Parents and Families are Essential Partners in Keeping our Schools Safe.



5 Important Ways to Help

1. Make sure your students knows their home address.
2. Keep Infinite Campus information up-to-date.
3. Encourage your students to report anything unsafe.
4. Contact your school's Principal / staff with safety concerns.
5. Follow the visitor & volunteer procedures at school.



Family Guide to School Safety

**What You Do
Matters**

Monthly Safety Drills



Monthly Safety Drills



Every school in the district is required by state law to run safety drills every month.

Safety drills include fire/evacuate drills, severe weather/shelter drills and this school year, an Intruder Alert-Lockdown Drill per the Georgia Safe Schools Act (HB 147).

PLEASE REMEMBER

Remember to follow DCSD's Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Every classroom and office has a specific Standard Response Protocol - posted along with evacuation routes.

Family Guide to School Safety

Monthly Safety & Security Reminders

**What You Do
Matters**





**SAFETY
IS OUR
TOP
PRIORITY**

All DCSD schools and facilities host safety and security trainings quarterly, with faculty and staff, where best practices and reminders are discussed, modeled, and shared with DCSD staff.

As a compliment, monthly safety and security tips and reminders are shared with DCSD families and staff; so, safety is always a **TOP PRIORITY**.

Athletics & Extracurricular Events

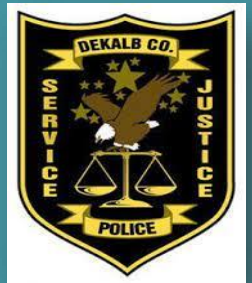


Athletics & Extracurricular Events

DCSD, in partnership with Dekalb County Police Department, DeKalb Fire & Rescue and Metro Ambulance Services, have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for each athletic facility.

All extracurricular events are directly supervised by DCSD School Administration, Campus Security, and DCSD School Resource Officers. In addition to DCPD, they are also supported by certified Athletic Trainers and other staff trained in CPR, AED and Stop the Bleed.

Events with large crowds are supported by DCPD, DCFD, and Metro Ambulance Services. Additionally, designated events will require all guests to pass through a weapons detection system.



Family Guide to School Safety



**What is HB 147,
Safe Schools Act?**

Safe Schools Act, HB 147 went into effect on July 1, 2023

Every public school is required to conduct an **Intruder Alert Drill** for students, school administrators, teachers and other DCSD personnel.



HB 147 also requires every school to have an approved Safety Plan reviewed by DeKalb EMA and GEMA.

Family Guide to School Safety

When is the state window to conduct the Intruder Alert Drill?

Is an Intruder Alert Drill like a Lockdown Drill?





An intruder alert drill and a lockdown drill both focus on **school safety, but they differ in the specific threat they address and the response they require. An intruder alert drill is a response to an active threat within the building, such as an active shooter, while a lockdown drill is a broader term for securing the building due to various threats, both internal and external.**

All public schools in the state must complete an **Intruder Alert Drill** by **October 1, every year.**



**INTRUDER
ALERT**



DCSD has been conducting Lockdown Drills as part of a comprehensive emergency drill schedule for the last decade.



HB 147 gives each district the opportunity to conduct the Intruder Alert-Lockdown based on their specific needs and desired outcomes.

The law and best practice **do not promote the use of a “fake intruder” or the inclusion of any type of instrument that could be mistaken as a weapon.**

Family Guide to School Safety



How will the Governor's School Safety Grant (HB 18) dollars be utilized?



Each district in Georgia receives annual safety funding through HB 18, the Appropriations Bill.

Based on a needs analysis, feedback from the District's Safety Team and BOE approval, DCSD has utilized funds, and will be using funds towards:



✓ **Safety Personnel** at Each School



✓ **CENTEGIX** Pushbutton Alert System



✓ **Evolv** Weapon Detection System



✓ **Evolv eXpediate** Bag Scanners



Evacuation Safe Zones



Where does my child go in the event of an emergency, and they have to evacuate their school?



Every school has at least one designated, off-site **Safe Zone**.

Off-site **Safe Zones** could be used as the nearest possible gathering space until staff and students can return to the building or be dismissed home.

Specifics are kept confidential to protect students, staff and the host venue.

Family Guide to School Safety

Reunification

In the event of a catastrophic event at a DCSD campus, detailed preparations to reunify at off-site locations has been discussed, planned, drilled, and put into place.



REUNIFY

Family Guide to School Safety

Reunification

DCSD has protocols and procedures in place, in the event of a school / schools need to reunify off campus.

A vertical blue banner with a white star at the top, followed by the word "REUNIFY" in white capital letters.

A catastrophic event at a DSCD campus is defined as one or any combination of the characteristics below:

- * The impacted campus is deemed unsafe and/or has suffered physical damage.
- * There are injuries and/or loss of life.
- * The campus can no longer function as intended.



Although unlikely, a gas leak, downed aircraft or active shooter are a few examples of a catastrophic event and the reason why off-site safe zones and reunification locations are necessary.

The reunification process will be used to remove students and staff from the impacted location by bus and transport them to one of our reunification locations.



Close & Lock Doors

All exterior doors to every school are closed and always locked.

Additionally, all classroom doors are closed and locked during instructional time.





All DCSD buildings / offices, and schools has a visitor management system in place.

Upon entrance, every visitor is required to check-in and sign - in, in the main office.

Additionally, checks for sex offenders using the state database.

DCSD partners with YOU, county police and local fire departments, along with Georgia Emergency Management and the Georgia Department of Education to create a **SAFE environment for teaching and learning.**



Families and all stakeholders are encouraged to work with their administrators to address any safety concerns.

Additionally, families and staff, please remember to share any safety concerns and (or) questions.





<https://dps.georgia.gov/blog-post/2018-10-19/see-something-send-something-app-available-ga>

The Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center receives data information sent through this app.



9-8-8 IN GEORGIA

Coming July 2022

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SYSTEM

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities



WHAT IS 9-8-8?

A direct, national three-digit line, 9-8-8, will open the door for millions of Americans to seek the help they need, while sending the message to the country that healing, hope and help are happening every day. In Georgia, the 9-8-8 calls will be answered by the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Some of 9-8-8's key features include:

- Connecting a person in a behavioral health crisis to someone who can address their immediate needs and help connect them to ongoing care
- Promote cost efficiency by providing the most appropriate response
- Reducing burden on law enforcement, public health and other safety resources when not appropriate
- Helping end stigma of seeking or accessing behavioral healthcare

Right now, in Georgia, anyone experiencing a suicidal crisis or emotional distress should call GCAL at:

1-800-715-4225

or download the MY GCAL app, available on both iOS and Android devices, to access GCAL via text and chat.

GCAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

WHY DO WE NEED 9-8-8?

When there is a mental health or substance use crisis, many do not know what to do. Call their primary care doctor? Call the police? Call 9-1-1? Go to the emergency room? These responses place an unnecessary burden on local law enforcement and emergency services and rarely provide the most effective result for the individual experiencing the behavioral health crisis.

In Georgia you can call/text or chat GCAL now, but starting on July 16, 2022, individuals will be able to dial 9-8-8 for behavioral health crisis resources. 9-8-8 provides an easy-to-remember three-digit number to provide access to immediate behavioral health support.

The 9-8-8 law requires Georgia to enhance the current systems' ability to respond to those experiencing a behavioral health crisis by providing:



Someone to talk to

- Available 24/7 for calls, text and chat
- Peer-run hotline offering callers emotional support, staffed by individuals who are in recovery themselves, also called a peer warm line



Someone to respond

- Mobile crisis available statewide
- Coordinate with 9-1-1/EMS as appropriate
- Outpatient community provider response



Somewhere to go

- Crisis stabilization units
- Crisis service center
- Peer wellness respite
- Detox and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment
- Inpatient beds
- Outpatient crisis intervention

GEORGIA'S RESPONSE

In Georgia, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) is the state behavioral health authority as designated in O.C.G.A. § 37-1-25 and, as such, is the lead agency for the 9-8-8 implementation. To help ensure a smooth transition to 9-8-8, DBHDD is engaging with a coalition of stakeholders across the crisis continuum,

such as behavioral health providers, 9-1-1, law enforcement and lived experience advocates. Coalition members provide subject-matter expertise on elements of the current crisis system and where there may be improvement opportunities. 9-8-8 will have linkages and impacts across multiple groups, and the coalition will help shape the future of crisis services in Georgia.



The previous Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) remains available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

<https://988lifeline.org/>

Call, text or chat 988 to connect to a trained counselor.

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/be-dbhdd/9-8-8-georgia>



SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT VIOLENCE: TIPS FOR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

Families and school personnel play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and security for children after an act of violence occurs. Follow these key reminders and visit www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence to learn more.

REASSURE CHILDREN

- Reassure children you are there to keep them safe.
- Make time for children to talk about and learn to appropriately express their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs and help to put them in perspective.
- Emphasize what schools and caregivers are doing to keep people safe. Point out clear or visible safety efforts whenever possible.
- Explain that, although the possibility of school violence exists, the probability that it will affect us (our school) is very low. Most schools are safe, even though it may not feel that way in the moment.
- Be aware of how your emotions/reactions could contribute to fear/trauma in some children. It's okay to acknowledge your own fear/concern, but prioritize calmness in the presence of children.

MAKE TIME TO TALK

- Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk, such as hovering around.
- Let children's questions guide the information provided.
- If a child is fearful/worried/confused, listen and acknowledge (e.g., "This is really hard to understand."). Use statements like "Let's talk about what we are doing at school/home to keep us safe (provide 2-3 visible or clear examples). This is not a guarantee of safety; rather, it is reassurance adults are doing everything they can to support safety."
- Young children may need concrete activities such as looking at books, while some older children may prefer writing, drawing, or playing music to identify and express their feelings.
- Be mindful of a child's previous traumas or exposure to violence and chronic or systemic stressors in their life.

REVIEW SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Help children identify an adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel uncomfortable, threatened, or at risk.
- Review procedures and safeguards in school and at home. Be sure children understand the information.

OBSERVE CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL STATE

- Watch for changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns that can indicate anxiety or stress. Some examples include irritability, nightmares, and stomachaches. These should ease with reassurance and time.
- Seek help from a mental health professional right away if you are concerned about your child hurting themselves or someone else. Also seek help if they have more intense reactions such as excessive fear or anger that lasts more than 2 weeks.
- Limit television viewing and social media that may have disturbing images or graphic references to the event.




<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-families-and-educators>


NASP  **Hablarles a los niños sobre violencia: consejos para padres y educadores**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Las familias y el personal escolar desempeñan una función fundamental en ayudar a restablecer una sensación de normalidad y seguridad en los niños después de que ocurre un acto de violencia. Siga estos recordatorios clave y visite www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence para obtener más información.

 **Reafirmar la seguridad**
Haga hincapié en que las escuelas son muy seguras. Permita que los niños hablen sobre sus sentimientos y valide todas las reacciones manifestadas ante el suceso. Apoye las expresiones adecuadas de sus sentimientos y ayude a ponerlos en perspectiva.

 **Tómese tiempo para hablar**
Permita que las preguntas formuladas por los niños orienten la información proporcionada. Tenga paciencia y busque indicios sobre los que el niño desee hablar. Es posible que los niños pequeños necesiten realizar actividades concretas (p. ej., juegos de imaginación) y algunos niños mayores prefieran escribir o tocar música.

 **Mantenga explicaciones adecuadas al nivel de desarrollo**

Primeros años de la educación primaria	Últimos años de la educación primaria y primeros años de la educación media	Últimos años de la educación media y educación secundaria
Proporcione información sencilla y equilibrada por una garantía de seguridad	Responda preguntas y ayude a separar la realidad de la fantasía.	Haga hincapié en el rol del estudiante en materia de seguridad y en cómo obtener apoyo.

 **Revisar los procedimientos de seguridad**
Ayúdeles a los niños a identificar a un adulto en la escuela y la comunidad a quien puedan acudir en caso de sentirse amenazados o en riesgo. Revise los procedimientos y las medidas de seguridad en los entornos de la escuela y el hogar.

 **Observar el estado emocional de los niños**
Algunos no se expresarán oralmente, pero los cambios en el comportamiento, el apetito o los hábitos de sueño pueden indicar ansiedad o estrés. Busque la ayuda de un profesional en salud mental para tratar a quienes tengan reacciones más intensas.

 **Siga una rutina normal**
Mantenga un cronograma regular para asegurar y promover la salud física y mental. Fomenteles mantenerse al día con sus tareas escolares y actividades extracurriculares, pero no los obligue si parecen agobiados. No permita que vean tanta televisión.

recurso



Ayuda



SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT VIOLENCE: TIPS FOR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

KEEP EXPLANATIONS DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Communications should be tailored to the specific needs, age, and developmental level of each child. Balancing the amount of detail provided with reassurances is important at any age.

Early Elementary

Answer questions simply, without extensive details; balance with reassurances that they and their loved ones are safe and protected.

Upper Elementary and Early Middle School

Provide factual information to correct misinformation. Help them separate reality from fantasy. Invite students to share their thoughts and offer alternatives of expression, such as play acting or drawing.

Upper Middle and High School

Listen to students' ideas and observations about current safety efforts. Emphasize why and how to follow school safety guidelines (e.g., not opening exterior doors), report concerns, and get help. As needed, assist students with safe and prosocial advocacy and involvement.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE WHEN TALKING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- What happened is scary and sad, but most schools are quite safe. In our community, school staff are working with families and public safety providers to keep you safe.
- The school building is safe because ... (cite specific school procedures).
- School safety is primarily the responsibility of adults, but we can all play a role. Tell an adult if you see or hear something that concerns you. You may provide important information that can prevent harm.
- Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others. Adults work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry. You can always tell ... (provide specific example).
- Stay away from guns and other weapons unless supervised by an adult. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- Violence is never a solution. Students can be part of antiviolence programs at school, learn conflict mediation skills, and seek help from an adult if they are (or if a peer is) struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

For information about continuing to support children in coping with tragedy, see *Guidance at a Glance: "Helping Children Cope With Tragedy"*

Follow these key reminders and visit www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence to learn more.

For additional guidance, visit www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis.

www.nasponline.org

© 2022 National Association of School Psychologists





SCHOOL SAFETY: A **SHARED** RESPONSIBILITY

